

A BOOK FOR TODAY

By DONALD MINTZ

It's Not All Cloaks and Daggers

THE CRAFT OF INTELLIGENCE. By Allen Dulles. 277 pp. (Harper & Row; \$4.95.)

Allen Dulles, formerly head of the Central Intelligence Agency, can hardly be expected to tell all. As a matter of fact, he can tell relatively little, and not much of what he says will be new to reasonably diligent readers of the newspapers.

This is perfectly predictable; no reader could expect otherwise. Still one feels vaguely, if foolishly, disappointed by "The Craft of Intelligence."

Mr. Dulles begins at the beginning with a brief history of intelligence activities. This section ends with the present American organization and the distinction between the CIA and the Defense Intelligence Agency.

Then we find sections on intelligence methods and requirements. We learn, if we did not already know, that vast amounts of scientific intelligence can be culled from the pages of technical journals and that though this is true for all countries, the Western democracies' technical press offers more information than its Iron Curtain counterparts.

For all that, there are things that can't be learned by open methods. Here clandestine work of one sort or another becomes necessary—"necessary," that is, if one grants the assumptions of intelligence work. The world being what it is, it is impossible not to grant those assumptions, but it is well to remember that they are not necessarily eternal verities.

Roles for Agents

In any case, the clandestine agents are men (and sometimes women) of many sorts. Some are essentially technicians playing their craft in an illegal fashion; a U-2 pilot violating the air space of a foreign country is such a man and it is good that Mr. Dulles

Other agents are more traditional in their methods. Mr. Dulles cites the celebrated Col. Abel and some of his own German contacts during World War II as examples.

We are told in some detail of the special methods of the Soviet espionage apparatus, but the chapter is tendentious rather than technical in tone, and very little of the material is unfamiliar.

It is in the nature of things that Mr. Dulles can answer the more serious charges that have been made against the CIA by counter-assertation rather than argument from is necessarily secret.

But he unnecessarily damages his case by stating parts of it in dangerously slippery language, language whose emotional overtones overwhelm the factual content.

Consider this paragraph: "The term 'defector' is often used in the jargon of international relations and intelligence to describe the officials or highly knowledgeable citizens, generally from the Communist bloc, who leave their country and come to the West. It is, however, a term that is resented, and properly so, by persons who repudiate a society which they leave in order to join a better one."

Now a citizen is a member of a state. His citizenship is independent of the social and political organization of the state. The paragraph is absurd unless we grant that "society" equals "state" which is impossible if we are to continue to speak English.

It goes without saying that Mr. Dulles uses the unqualified term "defector" to characterize those who go from West to East. He seems unwilling to grant that he who betrays his state is a traitor, that he who defects from his state is a defector.

Why not? The act is the same regardless of whether we approve or not. Gouzenko, Fuchs, Burgess and Maclean were all defectors—and traitors, too, for that matter.

We need feel no shame in frankly congratulating the first and damning the others. But the intellect is risking its security if it seeks to find two radically different words for two actions that as actions in the narrow sense are essentially the same.

Some Flaws

This is regretfully not an isolated instance. Moreover in one case, the story of the CIA's famous Berlin tunnel, Mr. Dulles himself seems badly informed about the European reaction to the discovery—and, particularly the reasons for the discovery—of the operation.

In most books, the reader can discount flaws of this sort, cheerfully or angrily as suits his temperament. But here, because of absolute necessity, assertions can often be buttressed by nothing beyond the authority and credibility of the writer. Mr. Dulles should have been agonizingly scrupulous.

Unfortunate wording and occasional cases of fairly obvious disingenuousness damage a moderately interesting book that should have been more virtuous than Caesar's wife.

STATINTL